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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2008

In Today's Papers

Erdogan, Baykal, Bahceli on PKK Terror  
Media outlets report Prime Minister Erdogan told his ruling AKP lawmakers in the parliament that Turkish military could launch cross-border operations into the north of Iraq if necessary. The PM's remarks came after the PKK attack on a gendarme outpost in Hakkari province that killed 17 Turkish soldiers over the weekend. Erdogan urged the Kurdish administration in the north of Iraq to cooperate with Turkey in combating terrorism. "Remarks or statements alone are not enough; if they are not carried into action, we will have to move on our own," stressed Erdogan. In "'Yes' to Effective Fight against Terror, 'No' to Backpedaling on Democracy," Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Erdogan also vowed to not take a single back step concerning individual rights and freedoms. Liberal Radikal says the PM makes pledges for democracy, but declines to give concrete guarantees for protecting democracy, human rights and freedoms.

Addressing his lawmakers yesterday, opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said northern Iraq should cease being a shelter for terrorists. "This task should be shouldered by Iraq and the U.S. The Iraqi government, fighting against the al-Qaeda terror, should also fight against the PKK terror," said Baykal. He added the U.S. should also be told that terror attacks on Turkey from the territories under American occupation would not be tolerated.

Opposition far right MHP leader Devlet Bahceli proposed a "buffer zone" set up on the Iraqi side of the border in order to prevent terrorist infiltrations from the neighboring country. Bahceli also slammed the AKP government for leaving the whole responsibility in the fight against terror to the military. Government

Spokesman Cemil Cicek said his government would "evaluate" the security zone proposal.

President, Justice Minister on Anti-Terror Measures  
Media outlets report President Abdullah Gul responded to reporters' questions yesterday before departing for Finland on a state visit. On a question, Gul said terror attacks take place in a period of "great improvement" in Turkey-Iraq ties, apparently by some who do not want the relations to be developed further. Gul expressed belief that democracy would isolate terror. On the controversial issue of expanding the authority of the military and police against terror, Gul stressed the debates, "a requirement of open society," would enhance democracy. Gul noted the military's demands for combating terror would be evaluated by the government and parliament.

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin said the government evaluated the five demands of the military for combating terror, and added two of them were supported. Sahin noted the government continued working on the matter, and stressed that neither freedoms nor security would be sacrificed while tackling the terror issue. Liberal Radikal sees a contradiction, saying while the PM was giving messages for upholding democracy in the parliament, the Justice Minister announced the government accepted two of the five proposals of the military to facilitate the fight against terror. "The AKP government had

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earlier turned down such proposals within the framework of the EU harmonization," says Radikal.

#### CBO Debate

All papers report upcoming debate at the parliament to extend mandate for cross border operation for one more year. Prime Minister Erdogan talked supportive in his party group meeting; "Cross border operation mandate is a strong deterrence factor and I expect all of the AKP members to be present at the parliament and show strong support for the motion." Papers also carry statements from other three parties represented in the parliament. Main opposition CHP leader Baykal urged government "to realize the long-term strategic political plan against Turkey when fight with PKK is planned" and he added: "Iraq must be a terrorism-free place. The responsibility for this belongs to Iraq as well as the United States." The MHP leader Bahceli urged for a comprehensive cross border operation both in land and by air "until PKK is completely eliminated." Meanwhile DTP opposed cross-border operations. Leader of DTP, Ahmet Turk suggested more reforms to solve the problem, saying that instead of cross border operation mandate, the parliament should implement reforms to ease tension.

#### TGS Chief Meets Academics, Analysts on Terror

All papers report on Wednesday, the military General Staff (TGS) chief General Ilker Basbug had a six-hour brainstorming meeting with academics and terror analysts, including Ercan Citlioglu from Bahcesehir University, Ihsan Bal from international strategic research institution USAK, and Nihat Ali Ozcan from economic-political research foundation TEPAV. Mainstream Vatan reports on its front page the TGS meeting discussed civilian solutions to the problems in the mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey. Mainstream Milliyet comments yesterday's meeting with academics and analysts indicate Basbug will give emphasis to the social, economic and psychological aspects of the fight against terror as well.

#### Editorial Commentary on PKK Terror

Hasan Cemal wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Turkey's Kurdish problem, or whatever you may want to call it, cannot be resolved unless it is taken away from the military's hands. Over the years, the military itself has become part of the problem instead of part of a solution. Both the government and the parliament must be vocal and active. Otherwise, neither peace nor democracy can be established."

Hadi Uluengin wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "There is no military solution to the Kurdish problem. The military should realize this and act accordingly by changing its misguided political strategy on this issue."

Mustafa Unal wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "In the past, Turkey has tried to contain terror by imposing lengthy states of emergency. If tough measures were an effective remedy to the problem, separatist terror would be history by now. The government has made it clear that it will not support efforts to re-establish emergency rule. Instead, the fight against terror will be waged with democratic methods."

Ali Bulac wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "The

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Aktutun military outpost attack has brought the security aspect of the Kurdish problem back to the top of the agenda. Still, we should not see the military as the sole authority in resolving the Kurdish problem. The military wants to tackle other issues as well. In this regard, what is the position of civic politicians, the government, and the governing party? Leaving the issue to the military will only stoke the fires of the problem. Civilians and the parliament are the ones who will find a solution."

Immigrants' Tragic End off Aegean Coast  
Hurriyet, Sabah, Radikal, Posta, Star report that at least 10 bodies were found at Gulf of Saros in Canakkale, Turkey and appears to be drowned illegal migrants who were trying to flee Greece. Star daily fronts "Human Drama at the Shores" referring to the 10 bodies found by local fishermen. Adnan Calkiroglu, the district governor of Gelibolu, was quoted as identifying bodies eight males, one female and one child as one of them was Turkish. He said five of the bodies had Iraqi passports on them, but the others had no documents revealing their identity or origin. The district governor said Iraqi authorities were notified of the incident, and the bodies were sent to Istanbul for autopsy. Governor of Canakkale Orhan Kirli said Turkish coast guard ships are searching the area to check if there are more bodies, "which seems very likely" he added.

Global Economy Continues to Plummet  
Media outlets note today that international markets continue to lose steam and focus on the global economic structure as the possible ultimate victim. Mainstream Vatan carries the banner headline, "It's Not the Banks, It's Countries That Are Being Sunk," by the global crisis. Vatan notes, "Iceland ranked at the highest levels of the U.N.'s human development index, but Iceland has come to the point of collapse because of the financial crisis," and "The public has started to stock up on pasta." Liberal Radikal reports, "Iceland has come to the brink of bankruptcy and depends on hopes of Russian assistance." Mainstream Aksam reports, "The World is in a State of Panic," as "Iceland is on the Brink of Financial Collapse." Economic daily Referans carries the headline, "The Crisis in the U.S. Creates Madness and Suicides Like 1929." Conservative Bugun

reports in "Crisis Madness," that "A U.S. man who lost his job killed his wife, children, mother-in-law, and himself because of his financial problems." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Turkey is Hit by the Crisis," as "Consumer confidence drops along with the lira." In addition, Cumhuriyet reports, "Markets fail to recover despite Europe's measures to save the banks, including raising the minimum guaranteed for bank deposits." Yasar Sungu wrote in Islamist-leaning Yeni Safak, "The most recent financial crisis signals the demise of brutal capitalism, which will pave the way for a better and fairer economic system. The current events do not represent the collapse of the United States, it is in fact the collapse of an unfair economic order."

In related stories, media criticize American CEOs for their lavish lifestyles. Mainstream Sabah carries the banner headline, "Lehman Brothers CEO Receives a \$350 Million Bonus after he Ruins the Whole World." Conservative-nationalist Turkiye reports, "Lehman Brothers CEO Receives \$23 Million Days before the

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Company Collapsed." Leftist Taraf reports, "Despite the Collapse of the Company, a Lehman Brothers CEO Gets a Bonus."

#### Plane Forced Down in Iran

An initially erroneous news bulletin from an Iranian news agency yesterday, one that claimed an American military aircraft had been forced down in Iran, stirred interest, confusion and criticism in Turkish papers this morning. Mainstream Hurriyet reports in "Was it a Hungarian Mistake," or "Iranian Bullsh\*t" that Iranian Fars news agency claimed that "Iran forced down a Hungarian plane with U.S. passengers," but later clarified the plane contained Hungarians. Mainstream Aksam reports, "The world is alarmed by reports an American aircraft was forced to land by Iranian fighter jets." Liberal Radikal reports, "News that an American plane had violated Iranian airspace created excitement in the media yesterday," but notes, "Iranian state news agency El-Alem later confirmed the plane was Hungarian and had no American passengers on board." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in "Iran Brings down a Plane Carrying U.S. Generals," that "it was later confirmed that the plane was not a military plane, but was carrying Hungarians who were on their way to Afghanistan for humanitarian missions." Mainstream Sabah reports in "A Forced Landing Crisis," that "The plane took off from Turkey and entered Iranian airspace without permission," and noted, "the Fars news agency created tension by reporting that Iran had forced down an American plane."

#### CNN Report Called "PKK Propaganda"

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in, "According to CNN, the PKK is a Feminist Organization," that CNN correspondent Arwa Damon is depicted in a video on CNN's website in a report from the Qandil Mountains. Cumhuriyet writes, "Some of the opinions related to the story (that are posted on the website's blog) show sympathy for the PKK terrorists." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in "PKK Propaganda from CNN," that "CNN recognized the PKK as an organization that is fighting for women's rights."

Here is a link to the CNN video:

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2008/10/06/damon.lok.pkk.camps.cnn?iref=videosearch>

TV News:  
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- On Thursday, several cabinet ministers and military and security officials will gather at the Counter Terrorism High Board meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Erdogan.

- On Wednesday, TGS chief General Ilker Basbug will pay a courtesy visit to opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal.

- 311 parliamentarians use their mobile phones to make donations to various associations. Parliamentarians' mobile phone bills, however, are paid by the state.

#### International News

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Turkey

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might help Yerevan in restoring Armenia's blocked relations with the external world.

- Kurdish regional administration leader Massoud Barzani said the death of 17 Turkish soldiers in Aktutun would not help the efforts for the resolution of the Kurdish question.

- UNSYG special envoy for Cyprus Alexander Downer will meet Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders Talat and Christofias in the divided island on Friday.

WILSON